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BOOK REVIEWS

BOOKS ON THE OLD TESTAMENT AND THE APOCRYPHA.

A CRITICAL INTRODUCTION TO THE OLD TESTAMENT. GEORGE BUCHANAN GRAY, D.D. Charles Scribner's Sons. 1913. Pp. 253. 75 cents.

THE LITERATURE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. GEORGE FOOT MOORE. Home University Library of Modern Knowledge, No. 65. Henry Holt & Co. 1913. Pp. 256. 50 cents.

THE BOOK OF JOB. HOMER B. SPRAGUE, Ph.D. Sherman, French, & Co. 1913. Pp. 243. \$1.25.

LE LIVRE DU PROPHÈTE AMOS. Extrait de la Bible du Centenaire, préparée par la Société Biblique de Paris. Société Biblique de Paris. 1913.

As Professor Gray says in his introductory chapter, little even of the canonical literature of the ancient Hebrews was written with any immediate intention that it should form part of a sacred book. This being so, an inquiry into the origin and history of this literature has to consider two questions which are more or less distinct. The one question is, how and when did the Jewish community accept this literature as sacred and authoritative; the other question is, how and when were the contents of this literature written.

Professor Gray in his volume concerns himself immediately with the second of these questions, prefacing his work with the briefest statement only of conclusions which many have reached and in which he concurs, viz.: Parts of the "Law" were accepted as an authoritative book as early as Josiah's Reformation in 621 B.C.; the whole, or substantially the whole, Law was so accepted by 444 B.C.; the "Prophets" became part of the Jewish Scripture not improbably soon after 250 B.C.; and the "Writings" gradually obtained the same position within the next two or three centuries. Then follow two hundred or more pages devoted to a popular but satisfactory statement of how and when the contents of the various Old Testament books got into their present form.

Professor Moore, on the other hand, devotes the first chapter of his valuable little volume to a discussion of the first of the above questions: How and when the Jewish community accepted the Old Testament canonical books as sacred and authoritative. This discussion on the formation of the Canon is marked by that in-

cisiveness of attack and clearness of statement which renders all the writer's work so valuable. The book as a whole is excellent, and is unquestionably the best popular treatment of the subject to put into the hands of interested laymen and laywomen.

The Book of Job is admittedly the finest literary creation of Semitic genius; as such it should not be reserved for the enjoyment of the few who may master Hebrew, but should be made accessible to all for their joy and inspiration. Dr. Sprague has studied the problem for twenty years, and the results lie before us in iambic metre. The Prologue and Epilogue he has left in prose.

An introductory essay advances the theory that the Book of Job is an allegory of man's past, present, and future, and that the main object of the discussion between Job and his three friends was the refutation of the prevalent hard-and-fast doctrine of the Old Testament, that worldly prosperity measures merit. It proposes a more hopeful solution of the mystery of undeserved suffering in the light of the doctrine of Evolution. It accounts for Job's inconsistencies by the theory that at times his unparalleled sufferings affected his reason, paroxysms of wildest frenzy alternating with lucid intervals of sweetness and light.

The Book of Amos possesses an interest all its own as being the oldest Hebrew book that has been preserved to us. Yet it gains a stronger claim than this upon our attention when once we have carefully read it; for the book has something inexplicable about it in that, oldest though it is, it presents many of the greatest thoughts of literary prophecy at an already high state of development. Any new translation of the Book of Amos, especially one that shows the scholar's hand, is therefore welcomed with interest. The French translation put forth by the Bible Society of Paris is to be commended as a compendium of scholarly results. By means of the clever use of type of different sizes, and brackets, parentheses, asterisks, etc., the original text, as modified by different hands, is clearly indicated. The notes at the foot of each page, though short, are illuminating. Perhaps some day English and American Bible Societies will give us such texts.

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